

306th Echo

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Bryan Moon, left, and Joyce Olson, also a member of the 1990 Doolittle China Expedition, meet with Gen. Jimmy Doolittle at his home in California just after completing the search mission for Doolittle plane remains.

British Combat Accounts Take a Different Twist

Editor's Note: The British don't tell their war stories in quite the same way we Americans do. Here is a brief example from "The Berlin Raids" by Martin Middlebrook.

"Press on Regardless", by Sergeant K. Apps, mid-upper gunner in a Lancaster of 12 Squadron which was lost on the night of 1/2 January 1944.

"We taxied out; our target, as usual, was Berlin. Before we reached the runway, the Skipper called up to say that we had an engine overheated and, after a quick vote, the crew decided to cross fingers and get the old lady off the ground as quickly as possible. This we did, only to find as we climbed over the aerodrome that the guns started firing on their own and there were tracers flying everywhere; this was due to a short in the electrics. The rear gunner and myself quickly dismantled the Brownings, therefore leaving the plane with no armament at all—and still, the young, motley crew decided to press on towards the target.

"When we came up to the Dutch coast, we heard from the navigator that the Gee box had gone U/S (?), so we had no homing device. Still, this did not deter us. With all that expensive load in the belly, it was on to Berlin or bust. We didn't

believe in dumping in the sea.

"We reached the target and released our bombs. It made us a total of twenty-four sorties, so we thought — home now to a tot of rum, eggs and bacon, and a nice long sleep, but it was not to be. Turning south, leaving the target, we felt both lucky and on top of the world but, suddenly, the engineer called to say our petrol was disappearing at a staggering rate. Thank goodness we had our reserve to get us to the North Sea. WRONG! When he switched over, this went just as quickly. Those four Merlins just went silent and, at 20,000 feet if you haven't any power, the old lady decides to put her nose down and find terra firma pretty quickly.

"The order came to bail out, so on with the emergency oxygen bottle and into the fuselage to get a parachute, only to find the rear gunner out of his turret, staggering around with no oxygen. I dragged him to the side hatch, put the ripcord in his fist, doubled him up and pushed him out. He got down safely. I then jumped myself. I was on my own at four o'clock in the morning. It was a long and silent journey down, so many things to think about. What was going to happen to me?

Laws Change, Many POWs Need to Check on Benefits

Luther Victory, a crew member out of the 10 planes we lost 24 Apr 44 on the long mission to Oberpoffenhofen, has been a very active veteran in the years since he left Stalag Luft XVIIIB at Krems, Austria.

Recently he had made some notes for the editor about the Veterans Administration effort to reenroll all of the WWII POWs. Maybe only a third of those now eligible for benefits have been signed up.

Luther thinks that some of them have not come back to the fold because when they left service it was then Public Law that stipulated you (1) had to apply within one year for entitlement, and (2) any injury had to be noted on discharge papers.

He wants to assure you, if you were a POW, or if you know someone who was a POW and has not registered with the VA, that you ought to take care of the matter immediately. This will assure that you and your family will be relieved of some of the concerns you may have when a late-in-life event could gain you immediate entrance into a VA hospital.

Luther who served many years as a National Service Officer and who was president of the Stalag Luft XVIIIB Veterans Association, is currently in the VA Hospital because he has lost his ability to walk. His own primary care physician has told him that the

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Tokyo Raid Story Part of Banquet

Jimmy Doolittle's earth-shattering Tokyo raid, early in WWII, will be the framework for our Saturday evening banquet program at Minneapolis, with Bryan Moon, a PR man and explorer of lost aircraft, etc., as our speaker.

He comes highly recommended, and has spent much of the past 20 years traveling the globe in all directions seeking to learn more about significant lost aircraft and the people who flew them until crash and/or bailout.

Born in Southampton, England, and just a trifle young to make it into the ranks of WWII warriors, Moon had an art education. It was through this medium that he got into a close association with aircraft. He started as a technical artist for the Vickers Group of Companies, then became advertising director for British Aircraft Corp.

He emigrated to the U. S. in 1966 and became an American citizen 10 years later. He became an assistant vice president of Aloha Airlines, then took a troupe from Hawaii to Vietnam for the U. S. Army, and in 1968 became corporate vice president for Northwest Airlines for advertising and sales promotion. He took early retirement in 1987 to center his attention on exploration and art.

In 1987 he was to begin trips to Kenya with George Adamson (BORN FREE), then was executive director of a PBS TV team that did a video documentary on the last days of Adamson's life. In 1988 it was off to the North Pole.

Later that year he was in Tahiti to authenticate art for the 200th anniversary of the Mutiny on the Bounty. For a period he lived with 45 original descendants of the Bounty mutineers.

In 1990 he was artist to the 1990 International Trans-Antarctic Expedition.

In 1990 he also organized and led the first U.S. Expedition to China in search of Doolittle's B-25 bombers. They identified five of the aircraft and retrieved remains of three of them.

He conducted two expeditions to Ploesti, Rumania, in search of B-24 artifacts from the 1 Aug 43 low level attack on the oil refineries. They located and brought back large sections of several planes as well as many personal items that had belonged to participants who did not survive the raid.

He has since been back to China searching the Doolittle bombers further, and has done a presentation with the crew of "30 Seconds Over Tokyo."

He and his son Christopher have founded MIA Hunters, and have searched the New Guinea jungles for a P-47, locating a plane lost for 50 years; then went twice to Sicily to finally locate the crash site of an A-36 plane and found the burial site of the American pilot.

His speech will follow our banquet in the Thunderbird Hotel in Bloomington on Saturday night, and we promise an interesting evening.

Fill Out 2 Forms for Minneapolis

Two Checks in One Envelope Mail to Hotel

We hope we have simplified your hotel and 306th Group registration somewhat. At least, it will all be mailed to one address. But we recommend that for everyone's help you make out two checks, one to confirm that room registration, or present the proper credit card information to them, and a second, which should also be made out to the hotel, but which will cover your activities while at the reunion, as indicated on the 306th registration form.

Because of a bit of a different setup this time, principally because Russ Strong is also functioning as chairman for the reunion when he could find no one in Minneapolis to take on this somewhat onerous task. And, he persuaded this locally owned hotel to assume some of our bookkeeping tasks, which the hotel is doing in cooperation with our treasurer, Bob Houser.

We all hope for the best!

We will run on the usual time schedule for our reunions, with many people coming in on Wednesday, starting activities on Thursday, and continuing them on Friday and Saturday.

The schedule on page 8 of this issue shows you what you can do, when and where, and also as to how much it will cost.

Obviously, one of the major events will be the Thursday night trip to the Old Log Theatre, where we will enjoy an excellent dinner and then move on to the theatre itself for a bit of British farce.

You already have some taste for it probably for what you may have seen in England back in the '40s, and its what all of have been watching for about 20 years on PBS stations as Mrs. Bucket battles her husband, her brother-in-law, and other assorted characters as she seeks to convey a life style that only she envisions. Or you have watched the shenanigans in the department store, or several other themes all of which give us a lot to laugh about whenever someone in the household tunes them in.

Guaranteed to give you a hilarious evening.

During Thursday we have arranged for continuous transportation to the Mall of America from our hotel. While the Mall is well within sight, and can be walked, it is not something you will really want to do. The editor has walked back from the Mall to the hotel. It is a bit of an arduous task, and local traffic conditions

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Work Moves Along on New Echoes Book

Production of the 306th Echoes book is moving along well at this printing. The pages have been gone over carefully by the editor and the printing crew, including at least three page-by-page reviews of the entire production. It now numbers 800 pages, including 26 pages of indexing.

It will be of considerable assistance to the 306th Association's bank account if you can see fit to place your order before the first of September. More than \$5000 had been realized by the end of June, with the largest single order being for six books.

As many of you have found, it is difficult to handle the old newspapers to read any older material, and the only index available is that which was put on the microfiche production of Echoes, which requires a special reader for viewing.

We believe this is the first such venture to be completed and ready for distribution as the Fall season opens. Word is about that the 303rd Bomb Group organization is preparing a reprinting of its "Hell's Angel's Newsletter" as well. We have not heard of anyone else undertaking such a production.

Our printing order is for 500 copies, with any further production unlikely because of the bindery costs, which mitigate against later printing an additional hundred or two hundred.

Books will be mailed in special cartons to insure that they are not damaged in the process of reaching you.

The indexing of the 2001 and later copies of Echoes will be continued, so they may appear at some later date when our organizational operation moves into its latter stages. If all goes according to present plans we may have some copies available for sale at the Minneapolis reunion.

Poles to the Rescue

Polish refugees who became British Typhoon pilots were stationed at Bovingdon, near London. Those guys could not wait for the 20mm cannon shot that was their signal to get airborne NOW, and chase down the German intruders. (They never climbed out on takeoff—just sucked up the wheels and flew the treetops to their prey!) - EJH

306th Echoes 1975-2000

Available in September, you will be able to have your own copy of 25 years of 306th Echoes, all reproduced in a book, including all pictures and the color pictures as well.

The cost for each of the new books will be \$55, including postage and handling. Produced as a paperback, with a heavy, varnished cover, the final size will be 8 3/8 x 10 3/4 inches. To make sure that you receive one of the 500 copies, place your order today.

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Obituaries

Allen E. Bertenshaw, 423rd crew chief and later a postal worker, died 8 May 01 in Lithia Springs, GA. After the war he became a mechanical engineer, working for the Boeing Co., and several firms in Chicago. He had suffered with Parkinson's Disease. He leaves his wife, Nadine, 4c, 9gc, and a ggc born on the day of his death.

Frederick C. Blum, 423rd waist gunner and POW (Ragnar Carlson crew), died 3 May 01 in Howells, NE, his longtime home. He joined the Group 28 Nov 43 and after 16 missions was MIA 22 Mar 44 on a Berlin raid. Blum had been in the furniture business for 30 years, retiring in 1980. He leaves his wife, Wilma, 5c, 14gc.

Alfred J. Carrozza, 423rd ball gunner—(Jim Leach crew), died 6 Jun 01 in Ojai, CA. His late wife was a Bedford war bride, Cynthia Pill, and he leaves 6c, 7gc.

Albert I. Evans, Jr., 876th Chemical Company, died in 1995 in Pinchurst, NC, where he had lived for some years after leaving New York City. He leaves his wife, Agnes, 5d, 4gc.

Warren M. Gentile, 368th engineer, died 7 Mar 01 in Des Moines, IA. He joined the Group without a crew 29 Apr 44 and completed his combat tour that fall. He leaves his wife, Pauline, 6c, 9gc. For some years he was manager of a furniture retail store.

Abraham Grondin, CO of the 876th Chemical Company detachment at Thurligh, died 10 Dec 00 in a suburb of Montreal, Canada. He joined the 306th 10 Jan 43, served as coach for the Thurligh football team, and stayed at Thurligh through the end of the war. Grondin leaves his wife, Lucienne, 4c, 6gc.

Col. Maxwell V. Judas, 368th copilot, pilot and POW, died 2 Sep 96 in Wartrace, TN, where he had been a cattle rancher since his USAF retirement in 1971. He came to Thurligh with the original Group as Otto Buddenbaum's copilot, and took over the crew when Buddenbaum was KIA. Judas was shot down 21 May 43 at Wilhelmshaven and then spent two years in Stalag Luft III. He left his wife, Jane, now deceased, 2c, 5gc.

Jacob P. Leroy, 423rd waist gunner and Casey Jones photographer, died 4 Jul 01 in Kalamazoo, MI, where he had spent his entire life. He flew in the Casey Jones project until early Jan 46. Leroy leaves his wife, Joan, 2c, 3gc, 2ggc. He had retired from Fader Equipment Co. in '84.

John M. Robinson, 369th pilot, died 7 Apr 01 in Carlsbad, CA. He joined the 306th 17 Apr 44 and completed 32 missions in Aug 44. He also completed engineering school at Chanut Field, IL, and was a squadron engineering officer at Biggs Field, TX. He had a BS degree from Stanford in '41 and a Harvard MBA '68. He retired from PPG in Pittsburgh, PA, as a vice president 1 Apr 83. John leaves his wife, Carolyn.

Dr. James R. Seaman, a dentist who joined the 4th Station Complement Squadron on D-Day, 6 Jun 44, died 10 May 01 in Walnut Creek, CA. He met and married his first wife, Frances Cookson, a Red Cross worker at Thurligh, in England. She died 12 Apr 81 in San Francisco, CA. He married again in 1988, his second wife also being named Frances. She is now an Alzheimer's patient, and he also leaves 3c.

Ernest E. Smith, chief of the Welding section, 449th Sub Depot, died 14 Apr 01 when his fishing boat capsized out from Port Aransas, TX. He had been an insurance appraiser in Oscoda, MI, for many years. He joined the 306th 7 Oct 42 and went home 16 Nov 45. He leaves his wife, Virginia, 3c, 8gc, 4ggc.

Robert J. Shurilla, 423rd bombardier and POW (Norwood Garrett crew), died 8 Jun 74 in Milwaukee, WI, where he had lived most of his life. He spent more than a year in Stalag Luft I. Surviving are his wife, Ruth, 6c, 12gc.

Thurman H. Smith, 369th tail gunner (Robert Hoyt crew) and POW (w. John Noack), died 7 Apr 01 in Lawton, OK. He joined the Group 15 Jul 43 and was MIA 11 Dec 43 on a raid to Emden. He leaves his wife, Ruth.

Harry Tzipowitz, 369th aircraft mechanic and crew chief, died 7 May 01 in Philadelphia, PA, of congestive heart failure, which followed on colon cancer. He was in the original Group and stayed in England until Aug. 45. A longtime attendee at reunions, he missed San Diego last year because of illness. Harry leaves his English war bride, Jean, whom he married in Dec 44 at Goldington, Beds. After the war he worked as an auto mechanic. He also leaves 2c, lgs. Jean has relocated and is living with her daughter at 647 E Godfrey Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19120-2107.

Reed Wins JU-88 Fight on 3 Engines

On the 13 December 1943 mission to Kiel, Germany, 1Lt W. Dale Reed, 368th, had his #4 engine knocked out by flak. He lost the formation but went on to drop his bombs, then started home alone.

Just off the Danish coast Reed was attacked by a JU88 which he managed to lose by diving into some clouds. Coming home on the deck, the JU88 found him again and attacked from the tail. Passing from the right, the JU88 turned back to attack from two o'clock.

Lt. Reed turned into the attack so sharply the JU88 could not bring its guns to bear and exposed the c/a to the concentrated fire of the bombardier, top turret and waist gunner as he went by. Three times the JU88 swung in to attack and each time the crippled B-17 swung inside the enemy aircraft, the dead #4 engine on the inside of the turn. The third time the 88 passed, both its engines broke into flame and the Junkers disappeared, firing red and yellow flares, probably a recognition or distress signal to nearby surface vessels.

Although Lt. Reed bumped into two enemy convoys on his way home, he landed at our base at Thurligh with none of his crew injured and no battle damage, except for that caused by the first burst of flak—a tribute to his piloting and the maneuverability of the B-17.

John A. Bairnsfather

306th Family

Gloria Beigel, wife of Sheldon Beigel, 369th, died 28 Apr 01 in Reno, NV, after suffering with Alzheimer's Disease the past seven years.

Virginia Norton, wife of Irving Norton, 368th squadron bombardier, died 11 Jan 01 in Orange Park, FL.

Tillie Leben, wife of Joseph J. Leben, 369th navigator, died 19 Sep 00 in Sun City West, AZ on the day following their 57th wedding anniversary.

Frances Perlmutter, widow of Bert Perlmutter, 369th gunner, died recently. He had died 8 Jun 88 in Ft. Lauderdale, FL.

Funds Low, Gifts Needed Says Houser

"We are running low on general operating funds," says Treasurer Robert N. Houser. "This has come about in the last several months as contributions have been few and far between.

"Our mailing list is still nearly 3000 people, and we need monies from the nearly 2000 former 306th men who are still on our mailing list, and also from the numerous "free-loaders" of one kind and another who receive our newspaper on a quarterly schedule."

There is a reply envelope enclosed in this issue of Echoes, and we encourage as many of you as possible to put something in to bring our treasury back to a healthier status than it is now enjoying. As we have no dues that can only come about by your participation.

Serious considerations are being given to reformatting Echoes, and to other ways of ensuring that we can continue to operate in the years ahead. Almost all of us are retired now, and the downturn in the economy has treated some pensioners rather poorly. But, all of us can endeavor to participate in bringing our "books" back to a more reasonable balance.

Our income in the future is seriously dependent upon your gifts, at least annually, any profits from the reunions, and some profit from our newest publication.

Mr. Houser looks forward to hearing from you in the weeks ahead.

VA Changes, from page 1

condition is easily traceable to his prison camp experience.

As Luther points out, the long walk that many ETO Prisoners took in December '49 across Germany, was in far longer duration than was the Bataan Death March of 1942.

"Most Ex-POWs were so anxious to return to civilian life that they wouldn't mention any health or mental problems for fear of not getting discharged," says Luther. "Then in later years when physical and mental problems arose, this one-year limitation blocked them. I have talked with many ex-POWs who then became disgruntled and disgusted and said 'to hell with the V.A.'"

In 1982, Victory points out, the Congress passed a bill called the Enabling Act for Ex-POWs. This bill did away with the one-year limitation, and included a number of POW related ailments that made a POW eligible for entitlement and benefits.

"Since then other ailments have been added. A POW Protocol physical was added also. To me, this reason has a lot to do with Ex-POWs not responding to numerous notices in the news media.

"If you are an ex-POW, or if you are his spouse, or offspring, check to see that YOUR man is registered, and if not call an American Legion, DAV, or other National Service Officer in your community for assistance," concludes Victory from his bed in the Houston VA Hospital.

War Costs Astronomical for All Sides

The most costly conflict in history resulted in enormous economic dislocations has been the result of WWII, and something with which we have lived since. Figures are to be found in Louis L. Snyder's *Historical Guide to World War II*.

The cost to belligerent governments for materiel and armaments added up to \$1,154 billion in US dollars. This represented an outlay of \$120 billion for Britain, \$317 billion for the United States, \$192 for the Soviet Union, \$94 billion for Italy, \$272 billion for Germany, and lesser amounts for other countries.

The above did not include damage to civilian property. In the Soviet Union this amounted to \$128 billion U.S., in Britain to \$5 billion. German losses were at least \$50 to \$75 billion, and in other European countries amounted to at least \$230 billion.

Any attempt to give an accurate estimate of the value of destroyed property is futile. The British had a third of their homes destroyed or damaged. For the French, Belgians and Dutch the figure approached 20%. Allied merchant shipping losses were 5,150 vessels, of which 2,828 were victims of Axis submarines.

Poland reported 30% of all its buildings destroyed, 60% of its schools and administration buildings, 43% of its art, 35% of its farms, and 32% of its mines.

In 49 of Germany's largest cities, 39% of the homes were destroyed or seriously damaged. Central business districts were reduced to rubble.

Transportation throughout Europe was disrupted by the destruction of rail centers, locomotives and bridges. Harbor areas everywhere were subjected to especially heavy bombardment.

Agriculture suffered heavily from the loss of manpower, animals, machinery and facilities.



Bagpipers led the parade along the reflecting pool at Madingley Cemetery, Cambridge, England, 28 May for the Memorial Day observances which are staged there annually. This was a beautiful, cloudless day which brought out a throng, as usual. On hand to present the memorial wreath for those of us of the 306th, were Joe Albertson, 369th mechanic, who has made his home in England for many years, and Robert J. Flood, 869th bombardier, who was visiting in England during April and May.

Flood reports that the celebration was well attended by UK veterans, members of the U.S. Embassy staff, and other Americans who were there to honor veterans. Adding to the occasion were the "Sally B", the B-17 which is housed at nearby Duxford airfield, and which is flyable, and then a "missing man" formation of American fighters stationed at RAF Lakenheath.



Does anyone know anything about this plane, pictured above?

The editor finds no information in his plane files about a "Tower of London". On the back of the picture it is noted that this was a 1943 picture, which is consistent with the style of the plexiglass nose.

In Wallace Forman's collection of data concerning B-17s of the 8th, the only "Tower of London" listed is 44-8571, a late 1944 arrival at the 91st Bomb Group which was transferred to the 306th after 26+ missions in May 1945. It was finally salvaged by the 9th Air Force in Europe 30 Jul 1946.

All of the pertinent data concerning the plane would have appeared on the left side of the nose, which we can't see. Therefore we are dependent on someone in the 306th to tell us if they perhaps remember the last three numbers of its serial number. Or, if you flew it on a mission, and can tell the editor which mission, he can probably locate the plane number. Tickle your brain a bit with this one!

No Control Over Pilots From Tower

Lt. Henry Sibley was flying control officer on 8 Aug 44, and it might have been better for the 306th if he had been on leave, not that anything was his fault. He was just the FCO of the moment, which the tower log notes was 1606 hrs.

"Last ops a/c landed. A/C 611 landed at Tangmere with gas leak. A/C 669, Lt. Andrew Kata, pilot, MIA. R/W 30 was used for landing. (note: R/W 24 under repair) but was changed to 36 when a/c 301 had a flat tire, blocking R/W. At 1437 hrs a/c 969 had ground looped to the right about 400 yards from end of R/W, knocking over two tents but injuring no one. At 1513 hrs, a/c 017 collided with a/c 619 which was stuck at the end of R/W 36. Previous to this, R/W changed to 18. A/C 017 had hydraulic failure. Pilot had been told to land short, but he did not. When a/c hit the runway his brakes failed and he ground looped the a/c to the right into a/c 619. Nobody was injured. Remaining a/c landed on 24 over obstructions. Division informed."

We won't report his notes for 26 Jul 44 when a/c 615Q crashed and burned near the control tower, and 31 Jul 44 a/c 943 and a/c 307 collided.

Sibley wrote them as he saw them!

Cook Got You Home Sooner

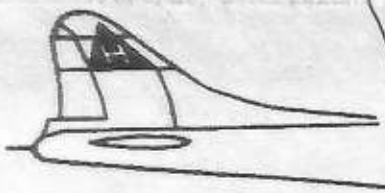
"Important as Guadalcanal may have been in countering the Japanese thrust into the South and Central Pacific, its capture hardly put the Allies on an express track to Tokyo. By midsummer 1943, they had advanced barely 200 miles in the Solomons and on New Guinea; strategy floundered. At that rate, someone observed, we would not reach Japan until 1960. That torpid pace clearly called for a change, and it came at the Quebec conference in August, when one of the U. S. Navy's chief planners, Rear Admiral Charles M. Cook, Jr., ... made a radical proposal. Instead of advancing island by costly island, he suggested, why not surge ahead in thousand-mile leaps that would bypass many of the strongest Japanese citadels? The original timetable envisioned the surrender of Japan in 1947 or 1948; Cook's plan, which was enthusiastically adopted, would accomplish that twenty-seven to forty months ahead of schedule (with a little help from a pair of atomic bombs)."

-page 292, "The Turning Points of Tarawa" from *No End Save Victory*, essays edited by Robert Cowley. New York, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2001, 688pp.

Doolittle:

14 Jan 45

I wish to congratulate all echelons and units of the 8th Air Force on the results of today's mission. The bombing was good to excellent on the enemies' top priority targets and our fighters topped all previous records with a score of 157 enemy aircraft destroyed. This mission will be recorded in the annals of the 8th Air Force as a record day and was only made possible through the combined and cooperative efforts of all air and ground personnel composing our bomber/fighter team directed toward the destruction of the German machine.



Paul Reixou, president; Lowell Burgess, vice president; Russell A. Strong, secretary; Robert N. Houser, treasurer; Frederick Hudson, Leland Kessler, Donald R. Ross, Frederick P. Sherman, directors; Wallace Boring, past president.

Ralph Franklin, British representative, National School Cottage, Keysoe, Beds., MK44 2HP, England; Telephone from U.S. 011-441234-708715.

306th Echoes is published four times annually: January, April, July and October, and is mailed free of charge to all known addresses of 306th personnel, 1942-45. Contributions in support of this effort may be remitted to the treasurer.

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The 306th Bomb Group Historical Association is a Federally tax-exempt organization and as a veteran's group is classified as 501 (c) (19).

Items of all kinds for the
Thurleigh Library can be
mailed to the address
shown below:

The Historian
HQ, 3rd Air Force
Historian's Office
Attn: Dr. Sleigh
APO 09459

A Small Town in Virginia Gave Its All

"As our boat touched sand and the ramp went down, I became a visitor to hell."

— Pvt. Charles Neighbor, 29th Infantry Division, Omaha Beach.

BEDFORD, Va., June 7, 2001 — President Bush came to this small Blue Ridge town June 6 to dedicate the National D-Day Memorial to the soldiers who assaulted the beaches of Normandy, France, during World War II.

"You have raised a fitting memorial to D-Day and you've put it in just the right place," Bush told the crowd of more than 20,000. "Not on a battlefield of war, but in a small Virginia town, a place like so many others that were home to the men and women who helped liberate a continent."

"What was gained that first day was a beach, and then a village and then a country. And in time, all of Western Europe would be freed from fascism and its armies," the president said. "Free societies in Europe can be traced to the first footprints on the first beach on June 6, 1944."

"What was lost on D-Day we can never measure and never forget," he said. "When the day was over, America and our Allies had lost at least 2,500 of the bravest men ever to wear a uniform. Many thousands more would die on the days that followed. They scaled towering cliffs, looking straight up into enemy fire. They dropped onto grassy fields sown with land mines. They overran machine gun nests hidden everywhere, punched through walls of barbed wire and overtook bunkers of concrete and steel."

The president quoted World War II journalist Ernie Pyle as saying, "It seemed to me a pure miracle that we ever took the beach at all. The advantages were all theirs, the disadvantages all ours. And yet, we got on."

The two-hour ceremony was highlighted by D-Day veterans reading other veterans' written accounts of the horror, sorrow, fear and heroism during the invasion. Hundreds of veterans traveled from across the country to attend the event.

French Ambassador to the United States Francois Bujon de l'Estang thanked all D-Day veterans for liberating France. Representatives from the United Kingdom and other Allied countries participated in the ceremony.

The price Bedford paid to be the memorial site was in blood.

"Upon this beautiful town fell the heaviest share of American losses on D-Day — 19 men from a community of 3,200, four more afterwards," President Bush told the crowd. "When people come here, it is important to see the town as the monument itself. Here were the images these soldiers carried with them and they thought of when they were afraid. This is the place the soldiers left behind, and here was the life they dreamed of returning to."

War historians say the tiny town's 23 deaths were the highest per-capita loss of any single community in the United States. The 19 Bedford fathers, sons, uncles and brothers who perished on D-Day died in the first 15 minutes of the invasion of Omaha Beach. Mortar and machine gun fire killed many before they could step from their landing boats. Two more Bedford men died before the month was out, and two more were killed before the war ended in May 1945.

Omaha Beach was the scene of the bloodiest fighting on D-Day. The Bedford

men were in the Virginia National Guard's Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. The 170-man company virtually ceased to exist as a fighting unit that first day — 90 percent were dead or wounded on Omaha.

Operation Overlord involved the United States and 11 Allied countries. The Allies amassed 5,333 ships, nearly 11,000 airplanes, 50,000 military vehicles and more than 154,000 soldiers to launch the largest amphibious invasion in history.

The Allied strategy was to create five beachheads, each three to four miles wide. Units on the beaches were to solidify their gains by linking up as fast as possible with airborne forces that landed behind enemy lines the night before to capture key locations.

Allied forces sustained heavy casualties in breaching Adolf Hitler's Atlantic Wall along the northern coast of France — 9,758 dead and wounded on D-Day, including 6,603 U.S. casualties.

Bedford was officially named the memorial site on Nov. 11, 1994.

Groundbreaking followed three years later. Today, a 44-foot-6-inch granite-and-marble "Overlord Arc" sits on a platform atop Bedford's highest hill. Its dimensions are symbolic — 44 feet for 1944 and 6 inches for June 6.

Surrounded by life-sized bronze soldiers, the arc dominates the memorial visually, but is only one element. Statuary symbolically re-creates a D-Day beach landing in a fan-shaped pool extending from the base of the arc platform. Plans also call for an education center, scheduled to open in spring 2003.

The \$13.6 million monument complex occupies 88 acres of former pastureland in Bedford, about 25 miles east of Roanoke.

Through the Eye of the Needle #4 of 10

Leland Dowden came to the 369th Squadron with William Hilton's crew 1 Oct 43. Flying with George Bettinger's crew as bombardier, he went down with them en route to Schweinfurt, Germany, 14 Oct 435 giving him just two weeks of combat. Black Thursday was the theme of his tale for this series, and a much more complete story is told in his book, which concentrates on the hospital experience. It is titled "One and One-Half Missions." Other authors to follow are: Don Eldredge, Robert Hermann, John Ryan, Robert Seelos, Myron Sorden and James Vaughter. Used by permission of the Stalag Luft III organization, per Gen. Albert P. Clark.

On that disastrous Thursday our 306th Bombardment Group left England as an 18 plane formation, but shortly after crossing the English Channel, three planes aborted because of malfunctions. It wasn't long before we got our first fighter attack and lost our first bomber to enemy action.

We faced continued fighter attacks and anti-aircraft fire most of the way to the target, which was the industrial ball bearing plants at Schweinfurt, Germany. On the way in we started losing planes early, and soon the original formation was making changes to adapt for the planes that were being lost. Before the mission was over, 10 planes from the 306th were shot down. Only five completed the mission. The day became known in our annals as Black Thursday.

We had very little fighter protection on

the mission, but were told that we were to receive P-38 escort over the Channel and that we could expect some P-47 coverage in the afternoon. It did not materialize for our Group.

We lost our Number 3 engine and it had to be feathered, but we were able to hold formation in spite of that and damage that had been done to the tail and wing sections. We were able to be flying north of Frankfurt and then take a southerly course. We were flying north of Frankfurt but it was from this point that so much was happening that it was difficult to remember the exact sequence of events. At this time there were four planes ahead of us and one off our left wing. Then we lost our Number 2 engine and had received large holes in the fuselage and the nose of the plane.

I received a 20mm shell in the left leg, along with injuries to my head, and with a broken leg it was difficult to move around in the plane. Our navigator was injured in the stomach and needed first aid, but our medical training was very limited. Except for morphine and sulfa powder, we couldn't do much for him. After the loss of the second engine we dropped behind the formation and were sitting ducks for the German fighters. They lobbed shells into us, and the Number 1 engine caught fire. We realized then this was the end; we were going down.

I was able to get the navigator out of the plane, and then bailed out myself, landing in the countryside east of Frankfurt. Several civilians and German soldiers helped me down from a tree and placed my parachute under my head and shoulders. I was carried into a small town and held in a barn until late that night.

While lying in the barn I managed to obtain water, and then the lady of the house brought me some bread with butter and marmalade. She also brought some scissors, and I helped her cut out a lot of the silk panels from the parachute. She said she wanted to make a petticoat with the silk.

I was placed in a truck and taken to a Luftwaffe hospital and the next day to the interrogation center at Dulag Luft. A week later, along with 50 or so other POWs, I was transported by a railway cattle car toward the north. The day of the trip we had nothing to eat until a sympathetic guard brought us apples from a nearby gondola car. It was my second taste of food since landing in Germany.

Seven days after my capture the train arrived in Obermassfeld, where British soldiers were carrying wounded troops on stretchers from the rail yard to a POW hospital, about a mile away. The facility was staffed almost entirely by British doctors, other English medical personnel, and clergymen who had been captured by the Germans during the Dunkirk withdrawal in 1940.

The afternoon of October 21st found me in a large room on the third floor of the building in which there were about 40 double deck beds. I had hope of getting some relief from my injuries there, but quickly discovered it was going to be several days before I would get any medical treatment.

The next day I was moved into another room consisting of about 20 single beds and which we dubbed bedpan alley. There I learned that the removal of the cast was going to present a problem because of the excessive swelling of my leg. I was warned that there was no means of eliminating the pain. I solved that problem when they started cutting. I passed out.

During this time I came in contact with the British Padre, and through him I had the opportunity to have Communion and to obtain books. Being able to read eased the time I had to spend in bed, immobilized by the break in my leg and not wearing a cast to permit treatment of the leg wound. About three months after being in Obermassfeld, I was permitted to sit up, but having been on my back for so long a period of time, I blacked out when I stood up.

A problem then developed with the leg wound, and the doctors decided to use maggots to cleanse it. They placed maggots on the wound and wrapped it tightly. About a week or 10 days later the bandages were removed, and when the wound was cleaned it was a healthy pink.

The military operation of the hospital was under the command of German medical officers and the chief medical officer known as the Chefarzt. Only the senior American and Allied officers had contact with the Germans.

The Red Cross and YMCA supplied us with some items that were very useful in occupying our time, and the major items were

books, needlepoint material, as well as checker and chess games. At one time I was invited by two of the British orderlies to see one of their scheduled football games. They placed me on a stretcher and carried me to an open area close to the building. In addition to this outing, I had the opportunity to go on the outside several times to get some fresh air and a little activity.

Mail to and from the States was very limited. It was four months before I could obtain writing materials for my first letter home. It was three months before I got my first letter from home and was finally satisfied that they knew of my whereabouts.

In February and again in April 1944, I was placed before the Repatriation Board by the doctors. I was turned down both times by the German Chefarzt, but referred to a future board. I continued to have trouble with my leg, but when it started to improve I was shipped off to Meiningen, just north of Obermassfeld. Unique about this trip was the transport, a truck powered by a large cylinder that burned coal for the production of fuel.

On October 14, 1944, one year to the day after being shot down, I passed the Repatriation Board. Along with others, I was shipped from Meiningen to Annaburg on November 30, 1944. We spent six weeks there, then went by train to Switzerland to Marseille, France, where we boarded the SS Gripsholm. We arrived in New York on February 21, 1945, two and a half months before VE Day.

Reunion, from page 2

are just not conducive to a safe and easy walk on your own. Take our vehicle on Thursday.

The hotel provides transportation also on about an hour and a half schedule each way, and that is what you can use on the other days. Even if you have your own car, I think you'll be happier using the hotel transportation except on Thursday, when we will have our own "wheels" from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Friday we have opportunities to sight-see in the downtown Minneapolis community, limited only by the availability of transportation.

There are long halls in the hotel, if you need exercise and will provide you with lots of walking opportunities. It is also possible to walk in the general area, although it is an area of hotels. The Indian artifacts and mounted animals from this part of the U.S. will give you opportunities for walking and talking. And, there are many spots around the building where seating will provide you space for long chats with old and new friends.

'Speedbird' Has Last Word!

Once in a while something good comes over the Internet. We liked this one:

Those German controllers at Frankfurt Airport tend to be a short-tempered lot. They not only expect pilots to know their parking location but how to get there without their assistance.

So, it was with some amusement that we (PanAm 747) listened to the following exchange between Frankfurt ground and a British Airways 747 (radio call Speedbird 206) after landing.

Speedbird 206: "Good morning. Frankfurt. Speedbird 206 clear to active."

Ground: "Good morning. Taxi to your gate."

The British 747 pulls on to the main taxiway and stops.

Ground: "Speedbird, do you know where you are going?"

Speedbird 206: "Stand by, ground. I'm looking up the gate location now."

Ground (impatiently): "Speedbird 206, have you never flown to Frankfurt before?"

Speedbird 206 (cooly): "Yes, in 1944. But I didn't stop."

From this ...

"Men of the 303rd Bomb Group pioneered the installation of two .50 caliber machine guns in the tip of the B-17's nose..." says the Hell's Angels Newsletter in its most recent edition. And that may be true.

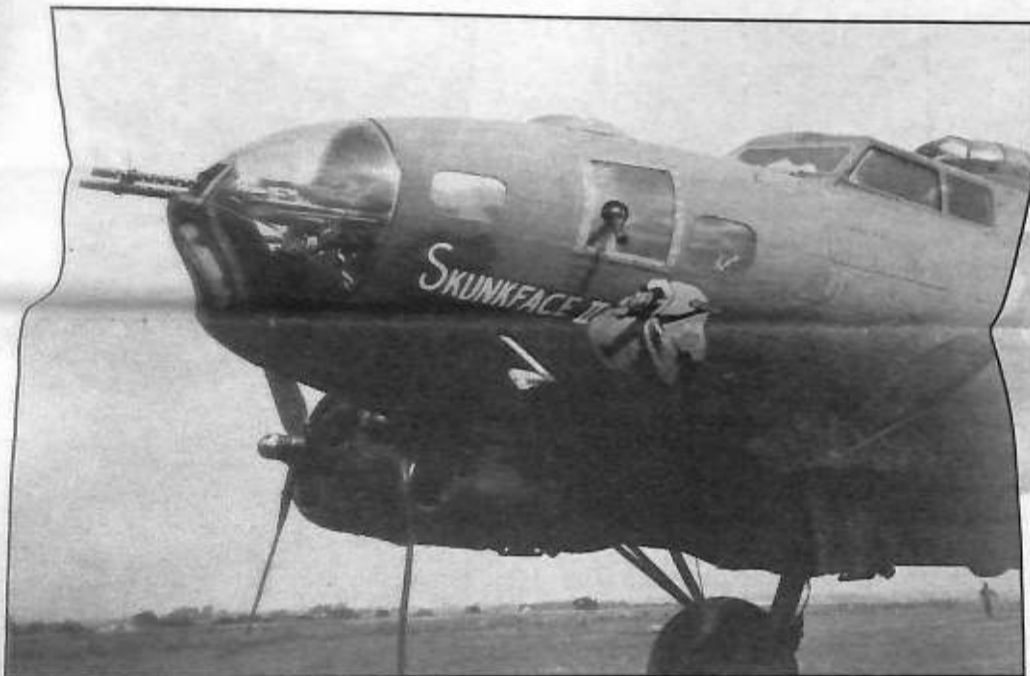
But the original nose gun in a B-17 was a product the 367th Squadron of the 306th, and was mainly the work of James Green, a ground armorer, and Ben Marcilonis, a welder.

Their ingenuity and skills together had an operational unit in "Sweet Pea" by sometime in late February. In fact, that plane went down 6 Mar 43 on a mission to Lorient, and as luck would have it, Green had transferred to flight status and was a member of Capt. John L. Ryan's crew that bailed out over France.

Quickly, the idea for the nose gun mounted to shoot through the original port for the 30 caliber machine gun was taken by a Lockheed tech representative to Langford Lodge in Ireland and there began the process of refining the original work of Green and Marcilonis so that all 306th planes could be thusly equipped and kits were then available for the other 8th AF groups to use.

A month after Green became a POW Ben Marcilonis stood alone to receive one of the two Legion of Merit medals conferred on the two men for their inventive flair.

As one looks today at pictures of many B-17 F models you will see nose-mounted machine guns in various mountings, and that will include twin fifties so mounted.



Ideas were sent back to Wright field at Dayton, OH, to the experts there, and out of it all finally came the two fifties mounted below the plexiglas nose and out of the way of the Norden bomb sight. This was the first thing to be noticed on the B-17 G models which began to appear in the 8th about the first of September '43. At the time the 306th got its first three G models, it also received three F models with chin turrets. As the units became available, some of the fast of the F's were given some updates that became parts of all of the Gs.

To this!



Charles Banas, left, and Lowell Burgess

In Memory of J.P. Toombs

Bob Welter Writes for Many in How His Life Was Spared by One Man

I didn't know him very long. We were both pilots in the 423rd Squadron. Yet not many days go by without me thinking of the day he saved my life, along with six other crewmen. It was nothing dramatic, just quick thinking that saved us all. I don't think he ever got any recognition for this heroic act, but from that day on we were friends. That day was 27 Dec 43.

We had a practice formation scheduled. My skeleton crew and I were to be #2, second element of a six-plane formation. We gathered at the plane ready to start engines when 1Lt J. P. Toombs, Jr., who was leading the second element, appeared. Maj. Maurice Salada, operations officer of the 423rd, had told him to take a plane we were assigned and my crew. Toombs' plane had been pulled for repairs and his crew scattered, thinking they were not needed.

I was eager to join the flight since the option of ground school did not seem to be as inviting as a chance to see some of the English countryside. You don't get much time for sightseeing when flying formation. Taylor Leedy flew as copilot and I got in the nose with Ed West, my navigator. This would give an excellent view of the formation and the countryside. The others in the crew were Carl Metz, tail gunner; Audrey Klepper, waist gunner; Virgil Poston, radio operator, and George Peterson, engineer.

The first element started forming over the field. As we were climbing to form the lead of the second element, I could see through the astro dome that the plane flying #2 of the first element was getting very close to us. Too close! If he got caught in prop wash, he would lose control and be sucked down and to the left...exactly where we were!

Suddenly we all felt the vibration and jolt of a midair collision. I told West to get his chute. As I grabbed mine, I reached up and pulled down the cloth padding between the pilots' compartment and the nose. Toombs and Leedy were sitting in their seats, and the four engines roared as Toombs applied power. Before I put on my chute, I crawled into the pilots' compartment to find out what had happened. Toombs explained that the collision cut the manual controls and that we were flying on AFCE (Automatic Flight Control

Equipment). Later, Leedy told me that as soon as they heard and felt the crash he grabbed the controls, but there was no response. That's when Toombs applied power and set the AFCE. That simple act gave us the needed time to evaluate the situation and take action.

Toombs asked me to go back and check the extent of the damage. I proceeded through the bomb bay and into the radio room. Two ragged holes, each at least two feet in diameter, gaped across the fuselage of the aircraft: one over the bomb bay and the other over the radio room. The manual control cables were flopping loosely.

Fortunately, no one had been injured and the crew was standing by for instructions. I reported to Toombs and explained that we were at risk of breaking in two if a landing was attempted. He gave orders for the three men in the rear, Metz, Klepper and Poston to bailout over our field. After they parachuted successfully we headed for the coast, planning to ditch the plane in the Channel after we jumped. All of our radio antennae were destroyed and we had no radio communication.

I returned to the nose to join West and discovered, in his haste to snap his chute pack in place he grabbed the ripcord and started to spill his chute. He had managed to grab the unspilled silk and was holding it in his arms. I told him to hang



If you want to read more about J. P. Toombs' last mission, turn to Echoes of April 1989 where Calvin Brend, one of three survivors out of his plane tells what happened on the Bernburg raid. This photo of Toombs (above) was in his crew picture which appeared in January 1995 Echoes.

on to the chute tightly as I located the pilot chute and placed it in his free hand. I then instructed him to keep it until he was free from the plane and then let the pilot chute pull out the remainder of the large canopy. I released the front escape hatch door and helped him make his exit. Turning around, I found Peterson coming into the nose with the same "spilled chute" problem. I gave him identical instructions, and he too made his jump. I followed Peterson out of the plane, and Toombs and Leedy were the last to bail out.

After I jumped I looked back and saw that Peterson had made it all right. The plane headed out over The Channel. Later we were told that the RAF had to shoot it down for fear of its turning back to land. I made it down safely and was able to see Peterson land not far from me. As we started walking, we were surprised by a farmer brandishing a shot gun, just in case it was "the Nazis". A British officer gathered us in a small vehicle and brought us to a Red Cross worker's home near by. West had the best story. It seems he landed near Lord Douglas's estate and was invited in for tea with Lady Douglas. The call was made to the 306th, and a plane was dispatched to pick us up. At this point we learned that our first three crew members had made it down all right and the plane that hit us landed safely on two engines.

As I said, I didn't see much after that day. On 22 February 44, just two months later, my entire crew was on a mission to Bernburg, Germany. This included myself and Taylor Leedy, copilot; Ed West, navigator; Ted Hallock bombardier; George

Peterson, engineer; Virgil Poston, radio; Charles Comstock, ball turret; Audrey Klepper and Ivan McCoppin, waist gunners, and Carl Metz, tail gunner. 1st Lt Albert A. Adams was leading our squadron and we were hit by about 10 ME-109s right after we dropped our bombs. The 109s made three passes, with the first scattering our formation. I was flying off Toombs' right wing when I noticed we were the only ones left in the formation. I saw the squadron to our right and moved over to join it for protection, hoping Toombs would follow.

On the second pass my plane was hit with two 20mm shells, one in the leading edge of the right wing and the other in front of the right aileron, which threw the ship into a violent left turn. At the same time the cockpit filled with dust. I checked the engine gauges, all reading normal, but the plane was continuing to bank left. I corrected with full trim tabs, which allowed us to resume normal flight. I looked for the cause of the dust and noticed a .30 caliber hole below my left window had ripped out insulation padding.

It hit the armor plating, shattered, and struck the aluminum seat bottom and continued on to finally stop in Leedy's backpack chute. Although I didn't see it happen, on the same pass Toombs' plane was hit and broke in two pieces. Only one chute was seen coming from the plane. That crew member, I believe became a POW.

After the attack we continued to the Channel, where the group leader (LTC Robert P. Riordan) decided to have a Group "let down" through the overcast. With the damage my plane had suffered, I decided that I would break formation and continue alone, not wanting to put any additional stress on the right wing. We returned in a very wet and overcast sky but were able to land without incident.

The Group lost six planes on this mission and the best account of that raid is described in the 423rd Squadron Diary. Fortunately, no one in our ship was injured.

J. P. Toombs was a very fine man, very able and well liked by all. Everyone in the 423rd felt his loss. Telling this story about him gives me great relief and satisfaction. This man's action on 23 December 43 has never been aired before, and he never received the recognition he should have had. I have always wondered how I would have reacted to this situation. Would I have had the presence of mind to act that quickly? I don't know now, nor will I ever know. I do know that I am here because J. P. Toombs did.

Two Planes!

The planes involved in the mid-air collision that Welter participated in were 42-30221, which he flew. It had come to the Group 18 Jun 43, and departed into the channel 27 Dec 43, where it was shot down by two RAF Spits. The other plane was 42-30841 and it returned to base, but was damaged enough that it was declared "salvage" the next day.

Thus, one of the problems that plagued all USAAF flying units was the loss of aircraft in non-combat events: mid-air collisions, taxing accidents, and other ways in which the combat population suffered until replacements became so numerous that they were literally stockpiled waiting for calls from the combat units. Deliveries came rapidly in the later days, something that early units only dreamed about.

306th PUBLICATIONS

Published materials now available from the Group will help you follow the 306th through the combat period 1942-45:

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Front row: Robert Welter P, Ted Hallock B, Edward West N, Taylor Leedy CP. Back: Ivan McCoppin wg, Mitt Comstock bt, J Virgil Poston ro, Audrey Klepper wg, Carl Metz tg and George Peterson eng.

22 February 1944

Interesting Interlude in Attempt to Escape Germans

By O. B. Bourn

Just as I neared the ground, after a long fall in my 'chute, I remember seeing the canopy at a strange angle above me, partially collapsed, then a green blur of the tree tops.

I came to flat on my back and blinded by the bright noon sun. After slowly testing one leg at a time and one arm at a time, I decided I had no broken bones. So I gathered up my chute, drug it over a field, across a road and into the woods where I tried to dig a hole in the snow and bury it. It was February and the air temperature in the woods was cold enough to keep the snow from melting.

I hid out in the woods all day, watching people go by on the road. First a German soldier came riding up on a horse and stopped near the place where I had crossed the road. I thought, with fear, that all was lost as I expected him to dismount, draw his pistol and enter the woods to hunt me down. However, he sat his horse for awhile, looking about, and then galloped off. My first close call.

During the afternoon as people went along the road walking or on bicycles, I could hear them talking. I tried to determine what language they were using as I didn't know if I had landed in Belgium, France, or possibly Germany. This didn't work because, even though I could hear them I couldn't understand the sounds.

Late in the afternoon a couple of wings of B-17s flew over on their return to ~~England~~ ~~from England~~ ~~and~~ ~~up~~ ~~where~~ ~~in~~ one of those planes looking forward to a good meal and a warm place to sleep that night. As they droned out of sight a loneliness came over me that I had never felt before.

In the distance I could see a small roof of a house, and as the sun began to sink below the horizon and the chill set in, I decided to head for the house and see if it could possibly be a safe place to ask for shelter. Once it was dark, I started off across the fields toward the house. It was much farther away than I had thought, plus my back and legs were so stiff and sore I wasn't certain I was going to be able to get to it. As I climbed fences and waded through deep snow the house got larger and larger. Finally I got to the road that ran near the "farmhouse" and realized it was one of the large communal farm buildings, with a large courtyard, that I had been warned was usually operated—or managed—by the German Army.

I finally decided, after hiding under a bush for some time and watching for anyone entering or leaving the courtyard, that I could make my way into it. The cold had caused my back and leg to become so painful I decided to try and get into the big building some way.

I slipped into the courtyard and crouching down behind a wagon watched and waited for some one to come out or go in one of the several doors I could see. Eventually an elderly, small man walked into the compound and up to a door. He knocked and as the door was opened I could see by a dim light from inside that he wore the working clothes of a civilian.

I waited a while to be sure no one else was coming and then, with considerable misgivings, eased over to the door and knocked. Soon I heard a voice, and I answered: "Je suis aviator Americaine." The door opened and a little, old man peered out. He hesitated for a moment then furtively reached out and pulled me inside.

He indicated that I was to stay by the

entrance door, then hurried down a long hall and disappeared behind a closed door. It seemed an awfully long time had passed, and I had about decided he wasn't coming back, when the door opened and the old man along with an attractive girl, who appeared to be in her mid-twenties, came out and up the hall to where I waited. They both spoke to me in French, which I did not understand, then after considerable discussion ushered me down the hall, into a large room and bolted the door.

Inside was an older woman holding a baby, several straight backed chairs, a stove, a cot, a table and a large double bed. The room was illuminated by a bare bulb hanging from the center of the ceiling. The girl motioned for me to sit down on one of the chairs at the table and soon the older woman brought me a piece of bread and a large bowl of broth.

As you can imagine, both were welcome as I had not eaten since very early that morning. Before bringing me a pencil and large piece of paper the man helped me get out of my flight boots and suit. The zippers on the boots were jammed tight and unmoveable so he cut them off with a large knife. He also had to help me take off my flight suit and heated suit as by now I wasn't moving about too well.

It seems now that we actually sat around the table and conversed but, of course, we did not. I conveyed to them how I got there and they made me understand that they saw me descend in my parachute. Soon the man pointed to the cot and I needed no more persuasion to get down to my longjohns and crawl in.

Later in the night I woke up and much to my surprise the light was still burning. I looked about and there in the double bed lay the girl with her baby and the older woman, all sound asleep. I pondered this peculiar situation for awhile and then fell asleep.

The next thing I was aware of was the old man shaking me and indicating to get dressed. This I did while the older woman warmed another bowl of broth for me. Once I had finished, by then the girl had come in with her baby, the three had a long and serious conversation that at times seemed to become an argument. Eventually the old man left. I began searching through my uniform pockets, looking for something, when I felt a coin. I pulled it out, handed it to the girl and said: "Here is a souvenir for you." It was a sixpence and much to my pleasant surprise she said: "Souvenir, oh merci, merci". I hadn't realized until then that souvenir was a French word. It was the first spoken communication I had had and I felt as though I had just made contact with the world once again, a joyful feeling.

Suddenly, the big, board window on one side of the room opened and outside was the old man beckoning me to climb out through the window and join him. Just before I did, the girl gave me a small sack which I later discovered had an apple and a piece of bread in it.

Once outside the old man took me a little way down a path that led into the forest and indicated, by pointing, which way I should go. I glanced back at the window to see the woman and girl with her baby watching me leave, and as I turned to enter the forest I waved to them good bye.

Later I found out from an English speaking member of the French Underground that I had become an item of extreme amusement, in addition to some ribald jokes, among the French Resistance movement in the nearby town. Unknown to me, until my English speaking friend

The Tumult and Shouting

The tumult and shouting have died away. The B-17s and B-24s will never again assemble into strike formation in the bitter cold of the embattled skies. Never again will the musical thunder of their passage cause the very earth to tremble, the source of sound lost in infinity and seeming to emanate from all things, visible and invisible.

The great, deep throated engines are forever silent, replaced by the flat, toneless roar of the jets and rockets. But, on bleak and lonely winter nights, ghosts of squadrons take off silently in the whirling mists of the North Sea from the ancient weed-choked runways and wing away towards the east, never to return.

On other nights, the deserted woodlands ring with unheard laughter and gay voices of young men and women who once passed that way. Recollections of all these fade a little with each passing year until at last there will finally remain only the indelible records of the all-seeing master of the universe to recall the deeds of valor excelled by no other nation, arm, or service. These sacred scrolls will remain forever the heritage of the free and untrampled people of this earth.

Col. Budd J. Peaslee, of the same vintage as our Charles B. "Chip" Overacker, had a distinguished career in early bombardment aviation. He was commissioned 28 Feb 27 and went to combat as C.O. of the 384th Bomb Group, in which position he served from 18 Dec 42 to 6 Sep 43. After that he moved into a bit closer association with the 306th, first as executive officer of the 40th Combat Wing, and then as its commander. He was later credited with creating the 8AF Scouting Force, those P-51s who ranged ahead of the bombers to report weather conditions over the target, viewed through the eyes of a bomber pilot. Retirement caught up with him 30 Sep 53 and he lived nearly 30 years more, dying at Ft. Ord, CA, 3 Apr 83.

From his pioneering days with the 384th came his history of that 8th AF unit, *Heritage of Valor*.

Bombs Moved to Scotland

At some time during the 306th's stay at Thurleigh, Ernest Behrens, an ordnance officer, took bomb trucks and trailers to Scotland, where they stayed for three months.

Someone had the idea that 8th AF bombers could fly to Scotland where a bomb dump had been created, and the planes would then be refueled and loaded with bombs.

related the story, I had stayed all night with the young Czechoslovakian wife of the German military manager of the large communal farm. It was well known her loyalties were not with the Nazi regime. That day her husband had gone into town for business reasons but had decided to stay there all night rather than to go home. The Resistance fellows were circulating the story, which may have been true in one

From this vantage point it would be a much shorter trip to carry bombs to Norway and to drop on German naval installations. Whether this ever actually took place, was not clear, but the Germans for some time ran reconnaissance missions over Scotland to keep track of this work by the Americans.

part, that while he was in town spending the night with a lady friend, his wife was home entertaining an American flier.

Editor's Note: Bourn and his pilot, J. Ray Coleman, were taken in hand by the Underground en route to Spain and Freedom, but that was not to be and they were picked up by the Gestapo in Paris.

There may be no dues, BUT

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369th Hat

Grey summer, embroidered w/369th BS, B-17, First Over Germany \$10.00

306th Patch 3 inch, w/First Over Germany \$5.00

306th Patch 2 in. without First Over Germany 5.00

306th Patch, w.Group logo, 5 in. 5.00

367th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

368th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

369th Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

423rd Patch, 5 in. in full color 5.00

B-17 Gold pin for lapel or hat 5.00

306th decal w/First over Germany .50

306th Coasters, metal, black & silver, set of 4 in container 4.00

Total _____

Up to 2 lbs. 3.50
Priority Mail 3.95

Grand Total _____

Ship to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

The 306th Reunion for 2001

Registration for Events at the Thunderbird!
5 thru 8 September, 2001

Wednesday, 5 September 2001

Registration for 306th people will begin at 1 p.m. \$25x _____ \$ _____
This is different than your room reservation which is made only with the hotel.

Thursday, 6 September 2001

Mall of America vans for 306th only begin operating at 10 a.m. and will continue non-stop, in both directions until 3 p.m. The Mall will provide 1 coupon book for many shops and events as well as shopping bags \$7x _____ \$ _____

At 5 p.m. buses will pick us up at the Hotel for a trip to the Old Log Theatre for dinner and a play, "Run for Your Wife," a British farce. Return by 11 p.m. \$45x _____ \$ _____

Friday, 7 September 2001 \$25x _____ \$ _____
9 a.m. River City Trolleys will leave the hotel with 93 passengers for a three-hour tour of Minneapolis, with some off-and-on the busses. Back at the hotel for lunch

1-p.m. the River City Trolleys will leave the hotel for another trip through Minneapolis. This will terminate at the hotel at 4. \$25x _____ \$ _____

Dinner on your own.

Saturday, 8 September 2001 \$25x _____ \$ _____
9:30 a.m. Annual Business Meeting of the Association Ballroom
6:00 p.m. Cash bar and cocktail party outside the Main Ballroom on the Second Floor.
7:00 p.m. Annual Reunion Banquet. Make your selections for entrees at the right: Prime Rib \$35x _____ \$ _____
Chicken Kiev \$32x _____ \$ _____

Grand Total, due with registration \$ _____

Deadline for reservations 25 August 2001

Name _____ Spouse/Guest Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone (____) _____ Squadron/Unit _____

Special accommodations requested _____

Make check to Thunderbird Hotel with item noted "306th BG Reunion" Mail To: Cashier
Thunderbird Hotel
2201 East 78th Street
Bloomington, MN 55425-1228

REGISTRATION FORM 306th BOMBARDMENT GROUP REUNION SEPTEMBER 5-9, 2001

Mail to: Reservations
Thunderbird Hotel
2201 East 78th Street
Bloomington, MN 55425

Name _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

Names of Additional Person(s) Sharing the Room _____

Please check the type of accommodations desired:

Number of Guestrooms:	Type of Accommodation
_____	(1) Guest \$88.00/Room
_____	(2) Guest \$88.00/Room

For all reservations, please list each guest's name above. Suite rates are available upon request. Please call the hotel direct at 952-854-3411, extension 3383. Guestrooms need to be reserved by Friday, August 24, 2001. After Friday, August 24, 2001 reservations will be confirmed on a space available basis.

Special requests: _____ Non-smoking _____ Smoking _____

Check in Time: 3:00pm Check out Time: 11:00am

The hotel will accommodate early arrivals on a space availability basis.

Arrival Date: _____

The Thunderbird Hotel and Convention Center requires an advanced deposit equal to the first night's room rate or a major credit card number in order to guarantee reservations.

Card Type: _____

Card Number: _____

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Advanced Deposit: Include one night's room rate plus 12.5% tax. Deposits are refundable if cancelled (24) hours in advance of arrival date.